

PROFILE

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January 4, 1988

Plan's smoke-free policy is now in effect

Tobacco smoking is no longer permitted in any facilities owned or leased by BCBSF, including vehicles.

The company wants to protect employees' health, and it's helping smokers kick the habit. Thus far, about 200 employees have taken advantage of the 21-day, "I Quit" smoking cessation program.

Employees who pay \$25 each for American Cancer Society-approved educational materials are fully reimbursed if they attend every session and complete the program.

The Plan previously forbade smoking in certain areas, but a survey showed that the policy wasn't effectively enforced.

"This will definitely be enforced; it's being taken very seriously," program coordinator Diane Abood said. Violations will receive corrective action, as with any other corporate policy, she said.

This month's "Adopt A Winner" program will help production during the policy's implementation. As smokers' work quality could suffer during the quitting process, nonsmokers who wear "adopt" buttons will encourage them and help with their workload if the need arises, Abood said.

Research shows that ex-smokers are more successful at staying off cigarettes if their friends and family support them.

"More has come from this than just a smoke-free environment policy," Abood said. The Plan benefits from people of different areas interacting supportively, and employees have a heightened sense of pride in the company for being thoughtful enough to adopt the policy, and for being generous in offering the smoking cessation program, she said.

The cessation program offers

goal setting tools that are useful in other areas of self improvement, such as the MBO process, and the "adopt" program is an opportunity to instill teamwork. Both programs help people and they help to make a better company, Abood said.

PPC adds chiropractors to network

Preferred Patient Care has expanded its health care provider network with 250 chiropractors statewide.

"To the best of our knowledge, this is the only statewide network of chiropractors in the state," PPC Vice President Ernie Brodsky said.

The PPC network -- Florida's most extensive preferred provider organization -- now has almost 9,000 professional providers and 110 hospitals. Eligible chiropractors must be licensed in Florida for at least three years. They are reimbursed for services under the same conditions as any other physician in the program.

"We believe this expansion . . . will make our program an even more attractive option for potential members," Brodsky said.

PPC is available to employee groups of five or more and to individuals under age 65. It's in the State of Florida and federal employees' health care benefit plans, although the latter does not contain chiropractic coverage.



The spirit of giving

BCBSF employees recently shared the meaning of Christmas with some special youngsters who are learning to speak English. (Story, photos page 4) Karen Ausum of Systems Services is pictured with Mya Pel, age 6, who is from Cambodia.

PARD staff completes training workshop

The Provider Audit and Reimbursement Department (PARD) recently ended a successful four-day training workshop in Orlando. It was designed to emphasize the more technical and professional aspects of PARD operations, which staff had identified as a great need during organizational feedback meetings begun in November 1986.

The PARD staff development committee, a change agent in PARD since 1981, was the obvious vehicle to implement staff recommendations. Members decided last January that their best course of action was to improve the Management by Objective (MBO) process by developing standard operating procedures to ensure consistent implementation of the MBO principle in branch offices and in the main office in Deerwood.

After MBO guidelines were issued in May, the committee began developing employee training manuals, the first of which is due completion in February, and planning the Orlando workshop completed December 4.

Workshop courses included Bond Refinancing and Defeasance Costs, Medical Education Costs, Lotus and Computer Audit Applications, and several other technical, motivational and behavioral subjects. Instructors were recruited from Training and Development, Communications, Marketing, PARD, the National Association, outside consultants, and colleges. Staff feedback indicated that the program's quality was good.

Awards were presented to outstanding achievers in each unit: auditors Lynn Rigg, Yvette Valdez and Mariaelena Alvarez of Tampa, Jacksonville and Miami; reimbursement and administration contributors David Cornwell, Ann McVey and Erma Johnson; and Kelvin Dell and Art Coler, who received the Director's Award for Excellence as having contributed the most to the department's success in 1987.

As noted by Director Suman Makker, "PARD is the Medicare Part A operational unit responsible for contract auditing and reimbursement to 500 Florida

providers. We perform an important role in the delivery of health care services to beneficiaries of the Medicare



Kelvin Dell (r) receives Director's Award for Excellence from Suman Makker

program, and our employees understand this role and our commitment to superior performance and quality service to all of our customers.

"We have found that improved training and the sharing of knowledge among PARD units contribute to the overall effectiveness of the employee and the company. The best possible training of our staff is essential to maintain and improve the level of service to our providers and to HCFA, and to retain our position as one of the highest rated intermediaries in the country."

PARD staff committee members are Bill Tisdale of Tampa Audit, Silvia Sorondo of Miami, Carlos Carrero of Jacksonville, Don McCourt of Orlando, Al Webb of Research and Development, Kathy Towns of Appeals, Erma Johnson of Administration, Joe Bedran of Automated Desk Review, and Jack Wilson, Ann McVay and Keith Pearcey of Reimbursement.

Customer Service

"Among the very best"

"We can always count on (Liz Peralta, Field Service Representative, Tampa) to get things done. I have been administering health insurance plans for 14 years and rank her with the best."

"Gracious and pleasant"

"Evelyn Bryant (Customer Service Representative, Tampa) quickly and graciously answered my questions, and was pleasant the entire time. . . I congratulate Blue Cross/Blue Shield on having such an outstanding employee."

Impressive assistance

"I was deeply impressed with the knowledgeable, complete and courteous manner that Dale Roberts (Customer Service Representative, FEP Telephone Inquiries) handled my request for assistance."

"A refreshing experience"

"Her (Pat Thomas, Customer Service Representative, FEP Telephone Inqui-

ries) voice was pleasant and she made me feel that she was there to help me in any way she could. I needed some information that she didn't have in her file but she made an extra effort to get the information for me and seemed to be sincerely anxious to help me. It was refreshing . . ."

Frances Keith of Tampa and Jack Egan of Sarasota (HIS Field Service Representatives) received praiseworthy letters from podiatrists for "personal service" and for "trying to demystify an incredibly complex subject."

"Thanks for caring"

"Thank you (Peggy Kent, Supervisor, Major Accounts Service Unit II) for caring about people. It really made my day when you called and asked if I was all right."

"Gold ring" service

For catching an error: "I hope Medicare realizes they caught the 'gold ring' when they found you (Aloma Bennett (Medicare Secondary Payor Analyst))!"

BCBS NEWS

Most companies surveyed restrict smoking

"Amid growing concern about the impact of smoking on health and productivity, employers have sharply stepped up restrictions (on smoking)," the Washington Post reported. A study released by the Bureau of National Affairs and the American Society of Personnel Administration showed that 54 percent of 623 companies surveyed this year have adopted smoking policies, compared with 36 percent in a similar study in 1986.

One researcher who helped with the study said a major reason for the increase appeared to be growing concern about the health of nonsmokers.

Higher group premiums predicted for 1988

Group health insurance premiums could increase 15 to 20 percent for most groups in 1988, and as much as 40 percent for some groups, Business Insurance reported. It's due mainly to health care inflation, which could force some HMOs to raise rates as much as 12 to 15 percent. Other managed care programs also could see increases.

Insurers and benefit consultants also blame increased utilization of health services, an aging population, technological advances, and the cost of treating AIDS patients. Experts note that premium increases over the past several years haven't kept pace with health care inflation and could lead to even steeper increases in future years.



Clean lungs! Oh, what a feeling!

These folks are among about 200 persons who have completed the "I Quit" program the corporation offers to employees who want to kick the smoking habit. They are (top, front, l-r) Terry Paul, Mary Ann Zingaro, Wilma Oglesby, Elaine Lewis, (back) Debbie Richardson, Kim Blount, Toni Howard, Shirley Noles and Elaine Lewis; and (bottom, front) Gloria Statham, Sarah Johnson, Michele Sahdala, Gladys Habecker, (back) Bunny Halifko, Shirley Glasscock, Elaine Kowalewski and Marilyn Blaylock.



Med A & B folks ensure happy holidays

All 103 Medicare A Claims employees on 9-C helped two fatherless Jacksonville families this Christmas by giving them more than five carloads' worth of food, clothing and gifts they'd collected.

One family has five children ages 1 to 11; the other family has eight children ages 1 to 13. The employees, who bestow their generosity in a similar manner every year, were referred to them by the Visiting Nurse Association.

Employees of the Medicare B Claims second shift, who now number 209, "adopted" the Moncrief Senior Citizens Center, which is frequented by as many as 150 persons, most of whom are on low, fixed incomes.

The employees collected more than \$400 and bought the center a desktop photocopier the seniors had wanted, plus about 14 large boxes of food clothing and gifts.

The Christmas spirit will continue throughout the year, as each of the shift's 10 cost centers has chosen to do something special for the center month by month.

The experiences were rewarding for employees and recipients, and they boosted camaraderie within the departments, contributors said.

HOJ employees help needy

The 73 employees of HEALTH OPTIONS of Jacksonville's Deerwood office recently brightened the holidays for less fortunate people.

Despite working lots of overtime this year, at Thanksgiving they made time to donate 150 pounds of food to the Employees' Club for the poor.

At Christmas, they donated, or collected money and bought, gifts for two girls, ages 10 and 11, at the Children's Home Society.

Employees show kids the spirit of giving

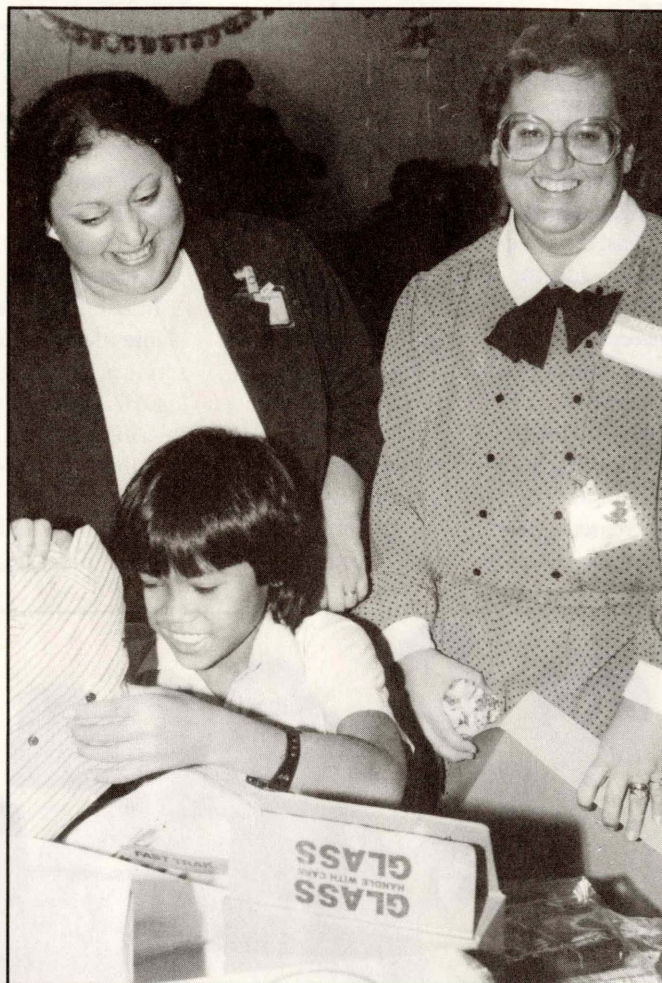
Fifty-seven pupils from Reynolds Lane Elementary School in Jacksonville recently were treated to lots of attention and gifts when they visited the Florida Plan.

The Southeast Asian youngsters are learning to speak English. Some came to the U.S. without their families, and some had undergone considerable hardship en route, said Betty Smith of Medicare B Prepayment Utilization, who coordinated the event.

As in years past, employees helped make the kids feel at home by treating them to a Christmas party in the home office, complete with a visit from Santa Claus.



Jeff Wollitz, Tom Gniech and Marjorie Moe entertained Phanarra Keo, age 5, of Cambodia.



Teri Small (l) and Jane Brennan enjoyed sharing with 12-year-old Thanh Son of Cambodia.

PROMOTIONS

Michelle Allen
Claims Examiner B
Med B

Tera Bobola
Claims Examiner B
Med B

Subrata Chattopadhyay
Technical Analyst II
Systems Services

James Gregory
Lead clerk
Private Business Records

Robert James
Claims Examiner B
Med B

Karen Jenckes
Group Underwriter

Lenette Paulk
Local Group Servicing Spec
Cashiers

Rosario Searls
Local Group Servicing Spec
Request Refund

TRANSFERS

Ines Bacolor
Claims Service Rep I
FEP Provider Entry

Gerris Brown
Claims Service Rep I
FEP Provider Entry

Patricia Burns
Supv State Group

Patricia Douglas
Claims Service Rep IV
Motors Dedicated Unit

Horace Freeman
Claims Service Rep I
FEP Provider Entry

Alan Grosse
Supv Central Corr
ASP State Group

Shelly Hargis
Claims Service Rep I
FEP Subscriber Entry

Barbara Harley
Senior Examiner
FEP Subscriber Entry

Monique Harris
Claims Service Rep I
FEP Provider Entry

Ronald Hartsfield
PPC Customer Rel Rep
Comp Suspense II

Denise Leist
Claims Service Rep I
FEP Provider Entry

Darlene McAllister
District Group Spec
Tallahassee

Lisa Ramos
Claims Service Rep I
State Group Claims

Celestine Robinson
Claims Service Rep I
FEP Provider Entry

Donald Suter, Jr.
Claims Service Rep I
State Group Claims

Karen Williams
Claims Service Rep I
FEP Provider Entry

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Frank Dorman, Editor
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